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Chergo/OCP/R8/USEPA/US
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To news@lavozeolorado.com
cc
bcc
Subject VB/I-70 Update

Hello. I'm writing to update you on the status of the Vasquez Boulevard & Interstate 70 (VB/I-70) Superfund Site and our upcoming actions to encourage those remaining residents and landlords to participate in the soil sampling and cleanup program.

The VB/I-70 Superfund Site residential soils cleanup will be completed by the end of this year. To date, we've cleaned up the soil at 760 properties. There are approximately 150 properties whose owners have thus far ignored our requests to gain access to sample their properties. In addition, there are approximately 30 property owners who have either denied us access to sample or denied us access to clean up their property.

As we have discussed in the past, EPA has been considering whether or not to take enforcement actions against some or all of these reluctant property owners to ensure that the health of current and future residents at these properties is safeguarded. In an effort to avoid enforcing against any of these residents and/or landlords, EPA is beginning a door-to-door notification outreach strategy. EPA representatives will be personally contacting these property owners and encouraging them to participate. EPA will also be providing them with information about our authorities to force them under the law to participate in this project. ***However, though within our authority to do so, EPA is not taking action against any property owner currently.*** Through this door-to-door personal outreach, we are hoping to yet receive permission from the remaining property owners, particularly landlords, to sample and, if necessary, cleanup their properties. We will reevaluate our position as the year progresses.

In addition to the soils investigation and cleanup, the VB/I-70 Community Health Program is progressing well and entering into its second year. As of January 1, 2006, Community Health Program Workers, who have been going door-to-door providing information on the health hazards of lead and arsenic, have completed 1031 home visits. Biomonitoring clinics set up last year in the neighborhoods within the VB/I-70 boundaries screened more than 600 children and some at-risk adults for lead and/or arsenic.

EPA has been investigating and cleaning up lead and arsenic in residential soils within the VB/I-70 Superfund boundaries since 1998. Elevated levels of heavy metals are present in some area soils likely due to a combination of historic smelting activity, application of unregulated lawn care products, peeling lead-based paint, and other industrial sources. VB/I-70 is comprised of neighborhoods in northeast Denver: Elyria, Swansea, Cole, Clayton, southwest Globeville and a small section of Curtis Park. The site includes more than 4,000 homes.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or want further information about this.

Thank you,
-jc

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